Living City

DECEMBER 1979, VOLUME 18, NUMBER 6

CONTENTS

POPE JOHN PAUL II IN U.S.: A program of life — 2

MARY: THE MODEL OF PERFECTION Part II
by Chiara Lubich — 6

MARIAPOLIS – 30th ANNIVERSARY
by Mario Cattini and Phyllis Scaringe — 8

CHRISTMAS: THE BRIGHT DAWN (From the Scriptures) — 14

HOT ASHES
by Oreste Paliotti — 16

ACTIVE VOLCANOES
by Piero Pasolini — 19

WORD OF LIFE
by Chiara Lubich — 21

EXPERIENCES — 22

IDENTIFICATION
by Ana — 23

THE UNITY OF CHURCHES: NO TO PESSIMISM
by Gabri Fallacara — 24

A CHRISTMAS STORY
as told to Dori Zamboni — 26

Editor
Sharry Silvi

Copy Editors
Vera Giannini
Carolyn Johnson
Kathy Webber

Contributing Editors
William and Yvonne Tibbitt
(Family Life)

Art Directors
Lucy Comolli
Longina Briones

Art Consultant
Rolf F. Rehe

Circulation Manager
Mary Young

Living City, bimonthly magazine. 5,000 copies, published by the Focolare Movement, a non-profit corporation at New York, N.Y. 10021, P.O. Box 496.

Copyright 1979
All rights reserved
Focolare Movement, Inc.

Subscription per year (new rates for 1980 — 11 issues):

U.S.A.:	US$10.00
Canada:	US$12.00
Elsewhere:	US$18.00
Airmail (all countries):	US$25.00

To subscribe use enclosed envelope or write to: LIVING CITY, P.O. Box 126, Jamaica, New York 11415

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS OFFER

For FIVE NEW subscriptions
A SIXTH can be made at HALF PRICE
We are sorry that it is not possible
to include renewals in this offer.

This offer expires December 31, 1979.

LIVING CITY is also published in:

ITALIAN: "Citta Nuova" Via degli Scipioni, 265 - 00192 Rome, Italy:

CHINESE: "San Sing Seung Yuet Hong" 70 Waterloo Road 11 B/F Kowloon, Hong Kong:

DUTCH: "Nieuwe Stad" St. Stephanusstraat 11, Nijmegen, Holland:

FRENCH: "Nouvelle Cite" 4 bis, rue du Montoir - F 92140 Clamart France:

GERMAN: "Neue Stadt" 8000 Munchen 83, Gleissnerstrasse 87, Germany:

PORTUGUESE: "Cidade Nova" Rua Pio XII 274 - Paraiso, Sao Paulo, Brazil:

SPANISH: "Cidade Nueva" Av. da Rivadavia 4939, Buenos Aires 24 Argentina:
"Ciudad Nueva" Ferrer del Rio, 1 ese A. 2°5a - Madrid 28, Spain.

OTHER ENGLISH EDITIONS:
"New City", 57 Twyford Ave. London:
"New City", 1933 Donada St., Pasay City, P.O. Box 332 Manila Philippines:
"New City", 367 Balwyn Rd., Balwyn North 3104, Australia.

A program of life

POPE JOHN PAUL II IN THE U.S.

The visit of Pope John Paul II gave us the desire that Living City were a daily paper and not a monthly magazine because we would have liked to write about it right away and see it in print immediately. Even if a few weeks have gone by, however, and our readers have certainly already read all that the Holy Father has said during his trip to America, we wish to publish excerpts from his talks and will continue to do so in the months to come. They are words of wisdom and a program of life.

TO THE YOUTH IN NEW YORK

"But today, I propose to you the option of love, whic is the opposite of escape. If you really accept the lo of Christ, it will lead you to God. Perhaps in the pries hood or religious life; perhaps in some special service your brothers and sisters — especially the poor, th lonely, the abandoned, those whose rights have bee trampled upon, or those whose basic needs have n been provided for."

(Madison Square Garden, October

TO THE SISTERS IN WASHINGTON

Two dynamic forces are operative in religious life; your love for Jesus — and, in Jesus, for all who belong to Him — and His love for you.

We cannot live without love. If we do not encounter love, if we do not experience it and make it our own, and if we do not participate intimately in it, our life is meaningless. Without love we remain incomprehensible to ourselves (cf. "Redemptor Hominis," 10).

Thus every one of you needs a vibrant relationship of love to the Lord, a profound loving union with Christ, your spouse, a love like that expressed in the psalm: "God you are my God whom I seek, for my flesh pines and my soul thirsts like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water. Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary to see your power and your glory" (Psalms 63:1-2).

Yet far more important than your love for Christ God's love for you. You have been called by Him, mad a member of His body, consecrated in a life of the eva gelical counsels and destined by Him to have a share i the mission that Christ has entrusted to the Church His mission of salvation. For this reason, you cente your life on the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, you cele brate His death and Resurrection and receive from Hi the bread of eternal life. And it is in the Eucharist es pecially that you are united to the one who is the ob ject of all your love. Here, with Him, you find eve greater reasons to love and serve His brothers an sisters. Here with Him — with Christ — you find greate understanding and compassion for God's people. An here you find the strength to persevere in your commit ment to selfless service.

(The Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, October

TO THE CROWDS IN CHICAGO

"We, though many, are one body in Christ" (Romans 12:5). The Church too is composed of many members and enriched by the diversity of those who make up the one community of faith and baptism, the one Body of Christ. What brings us together and makes us one is our faith — the one apostolic faith. We are all one, because we have accepted Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Redeemer of the human race, the sole Mediator between God and man. By the sacrament of Baptism we have been truly incorporated into the crucified and glorified Christ, and through the action of the Holy Spirit we have become living members of His one body. Christ gave us the wonderful sacrament of the Eucharist, by which the unity of the Church is both expressed and continually brought about and perfected.

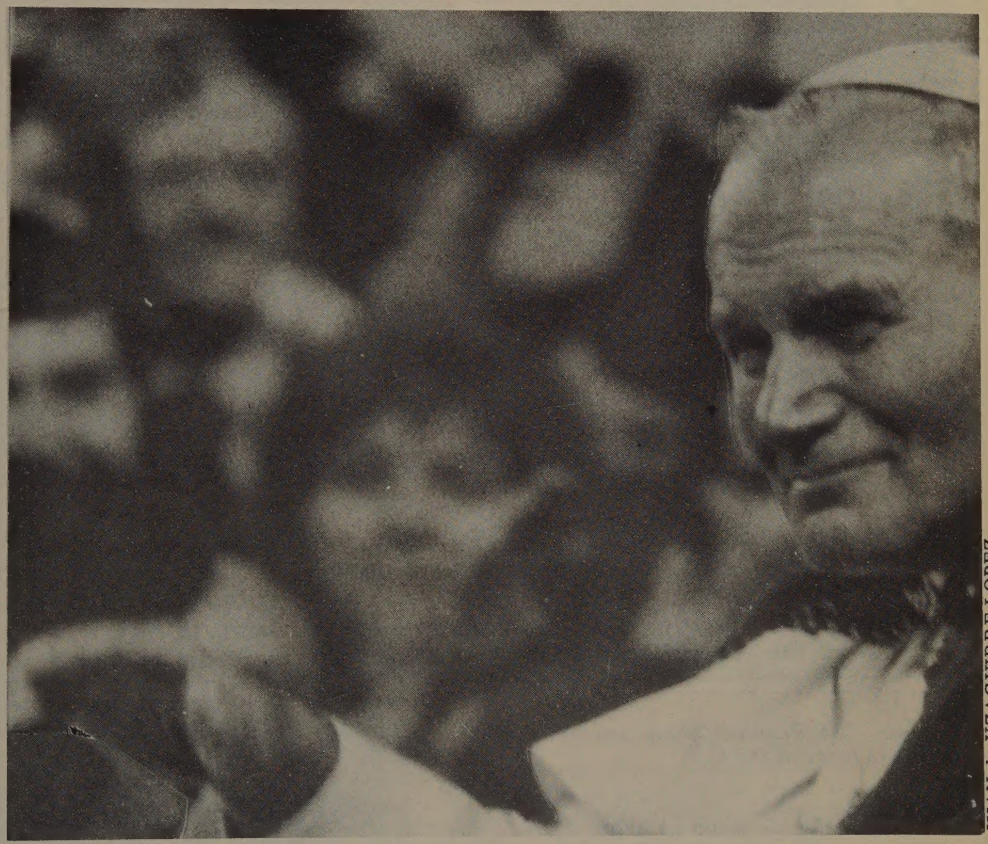
"One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph 4:5), thus we are all bound together, as the People of God, the Body of Christ, in a unity that transcends the diversity of our origin, culture, education and personality — in a unity that does not exclude a rich diversity of ministries and services. With Saint Paul we proclaim: "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and not all the members have the same function, so too we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (Romans 12:4-5)

If then the Church, the one body of Christ, is to be a forcefully discernible sign of the Gospel message, all her members must show forth, in the words of Paul VI, that "harmony and consistency of doctrine, life and worship which marked the first days of her existence" (Apostolic Exhortation on Reconciliation within the Church, 2), when Christians "devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Our unity in faith must be complete, lest we fail to give witness to the Gospel, lest we cease to be evangelizing. No local ecclesial community therefore can cut itself off from the treasure of the faith as proclaimed by the Church's teaching office, for it is to this teaching office of the Church, to this Magisterium that the deposit of faith has been especially entrusted by Christ. With Paul VI I attest to the great truth: "While being translated into all expressions, the content of the faith must be neither impaired nor mutilated. While being clothed with the outward forms proper to each people . . . it must remain the content of the Catholic faith just exactly as the ecclesial Magisterium has received it and transmits it" (Evangelii Nuntiandi 65).

Finally, and above all, the mission of evangelization that is mine and yours, must be carried out through a constant unselfish witnessing to the unity of love. Love is the force that opens hearts to the word of Jesus and to His Redemption: love is the only basis for human relationships that respect in one another the dignity of the children of God created in His image and saved by the death and Resurrection of Jesus; love is the only driving force that impels us to share with our brothers and sisters all that we are and have.

Love is the power that gives rise to dialogue, in which we listen to each other and learn from each other. Love gives rise, above all, to the dialogue of prayer in which we listen to God's word, which is alive in the Holy Bible and alive in the life of the Church.



JUAN de YZAGUIRRE LOPEZ

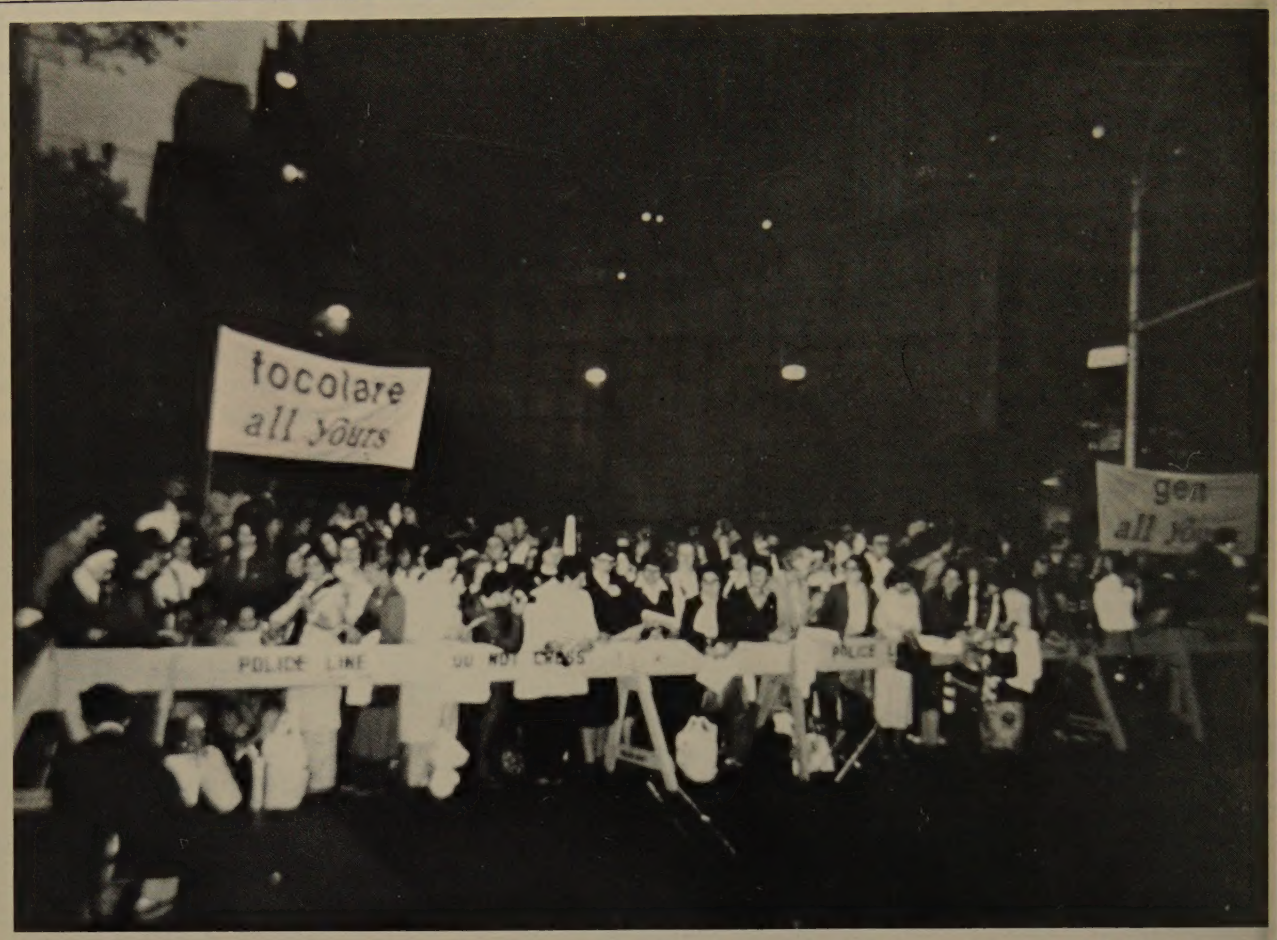
"The mission of evangelization that is mine and yours, must be carried out through a constant unselfish witnessing to the unity of love."

Let love then build the bridges across our differences and at times our contrasting positions. Let love for each other and love for truth be the answer to polarization, when factions are formed because of differing views in matters that relate to faith or to the priorities for action. No one in the ecclesial community should ever feel alienated or unloved, even when tensions arise in the course of the common efforts to bring the fruits of the Gospel to society around us. Our unity as Christians, as Catholics, must always be a unity of love in Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Grant Park homily, October 5)

POPE JOHN PAUL II IN THE U.S.

New York, October 2



At six o'clock on the morning of October 2 reporters began asking the people waiting in front of the United Nations with banners reading "Focolare All Yours" and "Gen All Yours," why on earth they had gotten up so early just to get a glimpse of the Pope. And the answer seemed to be the same from all, "Because we love him, and we would like him to know."

Some however, insisted, and asked, "What if he doesn't see you at all?" "Love remains, just the same, in fact, it is the only thing that will remain," someone answered.

Above: The Focolare group assembled before dawn in front of the U.N.

Below: The same group as above a few hours later.

JUAN de YZAGUIRRE LOPEZ

Pope John Paul II greeting the Focolare group.

And then the Pope came, "You feel as if he looked right at you, only at you, with a personal love for every individual in a crowd. It can't be explained in words," said Laurie McCracken from New York.

Chicago. Pope John Paul II and a group of Gen.

What a thrill it was for the Gen who had been waiting in front of John Cardinal Cody's house since 5:15 a.m. on Saturday morning, October 6th, to see the Pope's car stop in front of them and listen to their song.

"Gen, beautiful Gen" said the Pope and encouraged them to continue singing while he read the words of the song that they had handed to him. Denise Schroth, a Gen 3, then gave him a basket of flowers expressing to him the love of all the Gen 3 of North America. "I love you too," the Pope answered. And he drove away while the Gen kept singing "A new generation, a true generation, young people who have started to change themselves . . . "

JUAN de YZAGUIRRE LOPEZ

WHAT IT WAS FOR THE GEN

"At the mass in Grant Park the day before, the Pope really took me away, I felt we were going to be friends for a long time. When I saw him again it was like a reunion, like we had known each other, like he was this person I'd known all my life. I really felt his love for me and everyone there."

Bill Miller

"When the Pope stopped in front of us I was really overwhelmed by the presence of God in him. I just remembered that I had to love him and that's why I was there. When he left I was so filled with all the joy that I just kept singing."

Renee Sopala

"I think one of the strongest things was that beforehand I was a bit nervous but when the Pope came out, I felt that he had put me before God and I experienced a great, deep peace."

Diana Williamson

"I was very impressed when he looked at us, there was someone who really loved me and someone who my heart almost automatically went out to, spontaneously. One thing I remember is that inside of me, I said, 'this is what you should be like.' "

Kevin Paetz

"When the Pope came I was really excited. I saw the ideal person. He always lives in the present and he always loves every single moment. It was beautiful! Before giving him the flowers I was so nervous, I didn't know if I was going to do it right. So I just tried to live the present moment and everything turned out alright."

Denise Schroth

"When I saw the Pope, I was really struck by how much he loves. I felt so small in front of him, as if I wasn't there . . . , it seemed like his presence was enveloping all of us."

Bernadette Raha

"My own experience was simple. I wanted to do everything so that it would be a gift for the Pope. In each thing that we did, preparing a song or waiting in one place or another, I always tried to build unity among us. When he finally came he was such a gift for us. It was as if he was there for each person, I felt that he loved very much and he knew what we were there for, like our reason for being."

Bill Neu

"When the Pope came by in his car on his way to Washington to visit the President and took time to stop and to say to go on with what we were doing and to shake my hand, giving me that time, I really felt that personal love that he had for me."

Mike Murray

"What I felt the most when I saw the Pope so close to us was that it was unfair on my part to lose any moment. It seemed that he had taken up the whole cross himself. I felt the desire to share the cross with him, and to rededicate myself to Jesus Forsaken, and live this ideal of unity."

Jerry Hearne

CHIARA LUBICH

AN ASPECT OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT'S SPIRITUALITY BY ITS FOUNDRESS

MARY THE MODEL OF PERFECTION

PART II

In "Living City" Vol.18, No.5 we published the first part of a talk by Chiara Lubich on an aspect of the spirituality of the Focolare Movement: Mary, seen as a model of perfection. The comparison contained therein, dealing with different moments of Mary's life on earth, can help us to better understand and face the different stages of our own spiritual life.

That article dealt with several steps in Mary's life — the Annunciation, the Visit to Elizabeth, and the Birth of Jesus — which also relate to our own growth as Christians. Here we are publishing some thoughts concerning successive moments in her life with Jesus.

AVE CENTER, LOPPIANO

Continuing to follow Mary in the mysteries of her life, we see her presenting her son at the temple and meeting the elderly Simeon. This was a joyous moment because Simeon exclaimed, "Now, Master, you can dismiss your servant in peace; you have fulfilled your word. For my eyes have witnessed your saving deed . . . " (Lk.2:29-30). And with these words, he confirmed that this baby was the Son of God. However, it was also a moment of sorrow, because, turning to Mary, Simeon added, "and a sword will pierce your own soul too . . . " (Lk. 2:35)

Undoubtedly, Mary would never be able to forget those words from then on. Her life would always be overshadowed by that suffering which was certainly to come.

Something somewhat similar also happens to those of us who live this spirituality. In the beginning, we are led on in this evangelical revolution by enthusiasm as well as by conviction. But at a certain moment, through a talk, a writing or a conversation, the Lord makes us understand which is the indispensable condition to have God first in our life. This is the moment when we hear of suffering, of the cross, of Jesus crucified and forsaken.

We understand that in order for us to proceed along our way and be able to continue giving Jesus to the world, it is necessary for us to say a second "yes", and this time to the cross, imitating what Mary must have done in the depth of her heart as she listened to Simeon.

We see that after the warning Simeon gave her, Mary immediately experienced a great suffering, that of the flight into Egypt. Now we can understand how hard it must have been for her. She was experiencing persecution, a persecution stained by the blood of so many innocent children.

The ideal of life which we present to the world through this Movement is also in antithesis to it, because Jesus, the one whom we want to give, is a sign of contradiction. Therefore, when we bring this ideal to a city, to a country, the criticisms will start to come after a time. This is due not only to the errors which we ourselves may make, but also to those people who see the new life of the members of the Movement almost as a condemnation of their mediocre way of living Christianity.

This is the moment when we must take the necessary measures to save the work of God, just as Mary did with baby Jesus. We must remain closely united to the ecclesiastical authorities, follow their directives, love those who oppose us and, above all, pray.

UNITED NATIONS/Y.NAGATA

In "Mary, the model of perfection," Chiara Lubich, compares different moments of our spiritual life with that of Mary. After the necessary trials, if we correspond to the grace of God, we too, in our measure, can reach a certain union with God as Mary did during the intimate vears spent with Jesus in the house of Nazareth.

When Jesus was about 12 years old, he remained with the teachers in the temple and his parents lost him.

We can imagine Mary's bewilderment after having searched for and finally found Jesus: "Son, why have done this to us? You see that your father and I have been searching for you in sorrow" (Lk.2:48). In this new step in Mary's life, we see an analogy with something that typically occurs, at a certain spiritual age, to those who love God. After having gotten to know God and having given him first place in their life if they correspond to his many graces, at a certain moment they will notice the acute and insistent reappearance of temptations which had not bothered them for some time, ones which, through a special grace, seemed to have been completely overcome.

These temptations are generally against patience, charity and chastity, and at times they are so strong that they dim the fascination of the light which had first touched us. Our enthusiasm vanishes and our impetus is halted. We suffer because of it and, turning to the Lord, we say in other words what Mary said, "Why have you gone so far from me? You had made your presence so deeply felt in my soul that I was beginning to believe that, with you, I could overcome the world. Now you have gone, and left me in darkness."

And the Lord seems to give us an answer somewhat similar to Mary's almost as if to say, "Didn't you know that everything I gave you is mine and that you received it only as a grace? This aridity and these temptations have befallen you so that you might understand this clearly. In this way, I can accomplish in you all that my Father wants."

This phenomenon is what mystics refer to as "the night of the senses." For Mary, too, in a certain sense, the loss of young Jesus constituted a night of the senses. She could no longer see Jesus nor could she hear his voice. Her tender love, a mother's love, was deprived of his presence.

After this trial, there was a long period of time in which Mary lived with Jesus and no one will ever know how beautiful and intimate those years were.

In a similar way, those who accept these trials (which are at times quite long) and who overcome them with the grace of God can then move on to the many experiences of a life of union with God, in a new and deeper intimacy with him, something which they had never before experienced.

It would be beautiful to pause for a while at this step and describe it in greater detail, but we must continue to follow Mary along her way.

(to be continued)

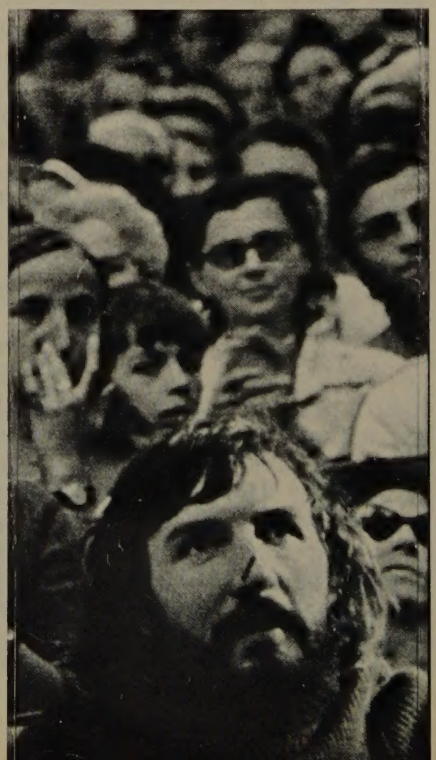
MARIAPOLIS 30th ANNIVERSARY

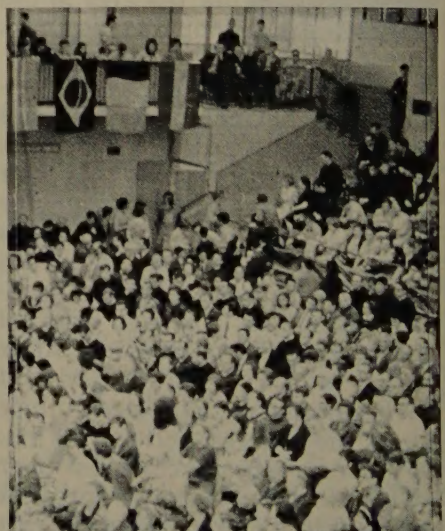
by Mario Catt
and Phyllis Sc

It was in the summer of 1949. The Focolare Movement, which was born of the testimony of Chiara Lubich and her first companions in Trent during the harsh war years, began to spread to Rome and other cities in Italy. Also, there was an ever-growing number of young people who chose to give themselves completely to this way of life. Already at that time a well known Catholic writer and representative in the Italian Parliament, Igino Giordani, met this group of girls from Trent, in Rome, and was fascinated by their clear choice of God and their limpid ideal of unity. In the life about which they spoke to him, he immediately recognized the hand of God for the renewal of the difficult world of politics to which he belonged.

It was at Tonadico, in the valley of Primiero in the heart of the Dolomite mountains, that those first focolarine gathered in a cottage belonging to one of them for a time of recollection in a climate of very high spirituality. Those

After the first ten Mariapolises in the Dolomite Mountains in Italy, the Mariapolis multiplied throughout the world: first in Europe, then in South and North America and later in the other continents.

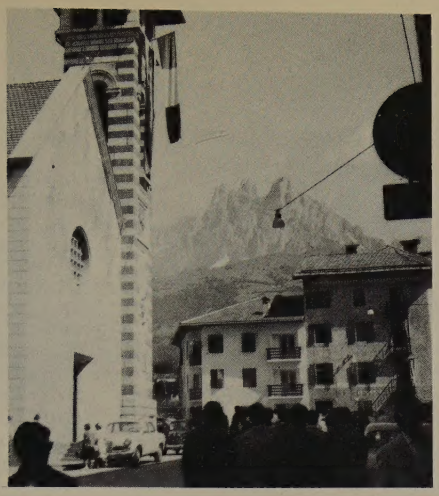




CITTA' NUOVA (3)

Above and left: Mariapolises in Europe

Everywhere the Mariapolises became a gathering for several hundred or a few thousand people. The spirit of intense unity is the main characteristic of each Mariapolis.



The village of Fiera di Primiero in the Dolomite Mountains in Italy

The first three summer gatherings of the Focolare Movement took place against the magnificent backdrop of the Dolomite Mountains. The 1959 Mariapolis, in the town of Fiera di Primiero, reached its peak of splendor with the participation of more than 10,000 people of all continents.

were unforgettable days when, surrounded by the stupendous beauty of nature, and in the most complete unity, in the silence of all human tensions, they lived a very special experience of the spirit.

The most intimate reality of the spirituality which was developing among them and of the future Movement then became clear to them.

That deep experience, which was also shared by Igino Giordani and some others, was to signal the go-ahead for the future of the Movement, anchoring it to the wisdom and logic of God. It was an immersion in light and in grace that consolidated that first tiny nucleus of people who had given themselves totally to the ideal they had discovered during the dark years of war.

That experience of living together in the most intense mutual charity, "with Jesus in the midst," where all were desirous of doing, or rather of being, the will of God in every moment and where all were ready with God's grace, to give their lives for one another, proved to be so spiritually transforming that it is considered by the focolarini[1] to be the first model summer gathering of the Movement. It was the first seed of what was to become the "Mariapolis" or city of Mary as they wanted to call it, an ideal city made up of people of all ages, social classes and walks of life. Mary is the model for those who live in the Mariapolis — Mary, who, in every moment of her existence lived not for herself, but for Jesus — the same Jesus whom they now recognized in the Eucharist, in the Church, and in their neighbor. The experience of living together in mutual charity is something that works deep changes in our way of reasoning, of feeling, of living, of being, something that makes many become one. The presence of Christ in the midst of those united in his name is, and remains to be, the great secret of the Mariapolis. His presence alone can explain the unexpected results, the radical changes, the rediscovery that so many make of God as the ideal of their lives.

From 1949 on, the "city of Mary" reconvened for ten years in that same valley and other points of the area around Trent, growing from year to year both in the number of participants and in the scope of its social witness. During the summer months there was a continuous flow of people who wanted to share in this new way of life. Many who came to stay for a few days, soon wanted to remain, and, if possible, never to go back because they felt they had found "paradise on earth." They were made aware, however, that that experience was not to be taken as an escape from the world, but as an opportunity for a renewal from within in order then, to be able to return, strengthened by it to give their witness in the environment each of them had been called to live in, to pay with their lives, to sow the seed they had found up there in the mountains.

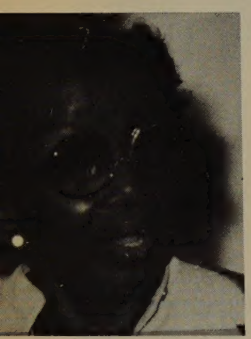
This went on until, in 1959, the Mariapolis reached its peak of splendor. More than ten thousand people of every race, of twenty-seven nations of all continents, with priests and religious of over seventy different orders and congregations, as well as numerous bishops who wanted to visit this

1) See "What is the Focolare Movement," inside front cover.

MARIAPOLIS — 30th ANNIVERSARY

ideal city, gave the 1959 Mariapolis a mark of universality, and on August 22nd the participants all together consecrated themselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary as she had asked at Fatima.

Chiara Lubich once wrote, "If one day men, not as individuals but as nations, will have learned to put themselves and the idea they have of their countries aside, and offer it as incense to the Lord of a kingdom that is not of this world . . . , and if they do it with the same mutual love that God



asks for among nations as he does among individuals, that day will mark the beginning of a new era. On that day, in the same way that the presence of Jesus is alive among those who love each other in Christ, he will be alive and present among nations, and he will truly be put in his rightful place as the one and only King, not only of all hearts, but of nations." There, in that big cosmopolitan Mariapolis it was as though a small blueprint of this new reality were already present.

From then on the Mariapolis multiplied throughout the world, wherever the Movement spread: first in Europe, then in South and North America and in other continents. And everywhere it became a gathering for several hundreds, or at most, a few thousands of persons, for a limited number of days — but always in the same spirit of intense unity which transforms everything. And its salutary effect and impact multiplied as well. And when it so happened that the Movement reached countries where many of the inhabitants were Christians of other churches, they, too, wanted to participate. And so the Mariapolis offered an experience of unity among Christians of different Churches.

And even in countries where the population was made up of followers of other religions such as Jews, Moslems, Buddhists, Confucianists, Hindus, the attraction of the Mariapolis led them to participate with great joy. They claim, in fact, to have found the essential values of their own religions revived, and even nonbelievers have expressed the feeling of "being home" at last.

This year, the growing number of participants and Mariapolises brought about a sense of renewal for tens of thousands of persons, from the far away islands of the Pacific to the highlands of the Andes, from Africa to the United States and Canada, from South America to Holland and Great Britain. And the same commitment made twenty years ago before Mary at Fiera di Primiero at the close of the first ten years of the Mariapolis in the Dolomite mountains, has been repeated hundreds of times throughout the whole world.

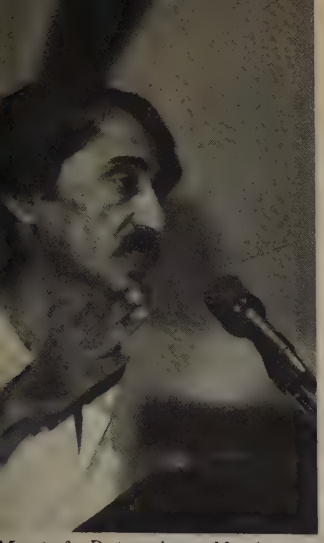
The Mariapolis continues to be an opportunity for the realization of a new way of conceiving human relationships, and of understanding man himself, which concretely echoes the Holy Father's message on man.

The bond of these new relationships is charity. "What is charity? As we know, it is a love that comes from above," explained Chiara Lubich in one of five talks on the central theme of the Mariapolis '79, *When did we see you, Lord?*

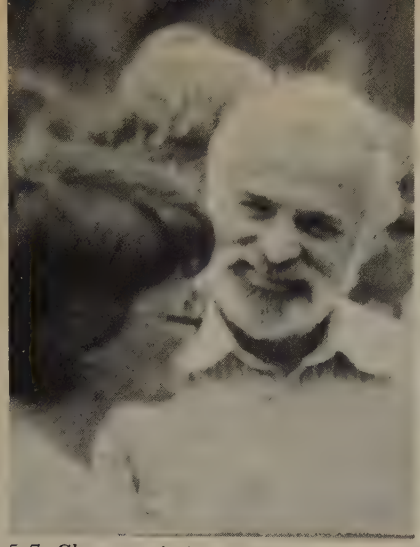
THE 1979 U.S. MARIAPOLISES were held in Las Vegas, NM (June 24-30), Lacey, Washington (July 22-28) and Alfred, NY (August 5-11). Beside the talks on the spirituality of the Focolare Movement (photo below), each day many experiences of life were shared by people of different ages, vocations (see photo 2), and religions (photo 1). Seminars were held on the various branches of the Focolare, among them the New Humanity Movement during which a farmer (photo 3) spoke on how productivity increased as a consequence of the application of the Gospel.
Much appreciated by all, at the East Coast Mariapolis, was the visit of Bishop Albert H. Ottenweller, Chairman of the Bishop's Committee of the Laity (photo 9, left) and of Bishop Felix Zafra from the Philippines (photo 9, right).
Between talks and activities the participants enjoyed joining the singing of the group on stage (photo 8).
Children, three years old and up, had their own program (photo 25).

East Coast Mariapolis: A talk on the spirituality of the Focolare Movement

The central theme of the 1979 Mariapolis, "When did we see you, Lord?" was developed each day and followed with great interest by the participants. The five talks, prepared by Chiara Lubich are now published by New City Press, NY in the book by the same title.



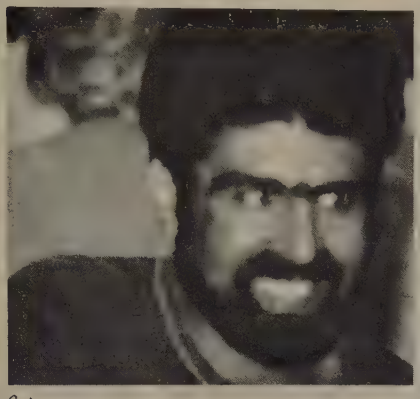
Mustafa Petrovic, a Moslem



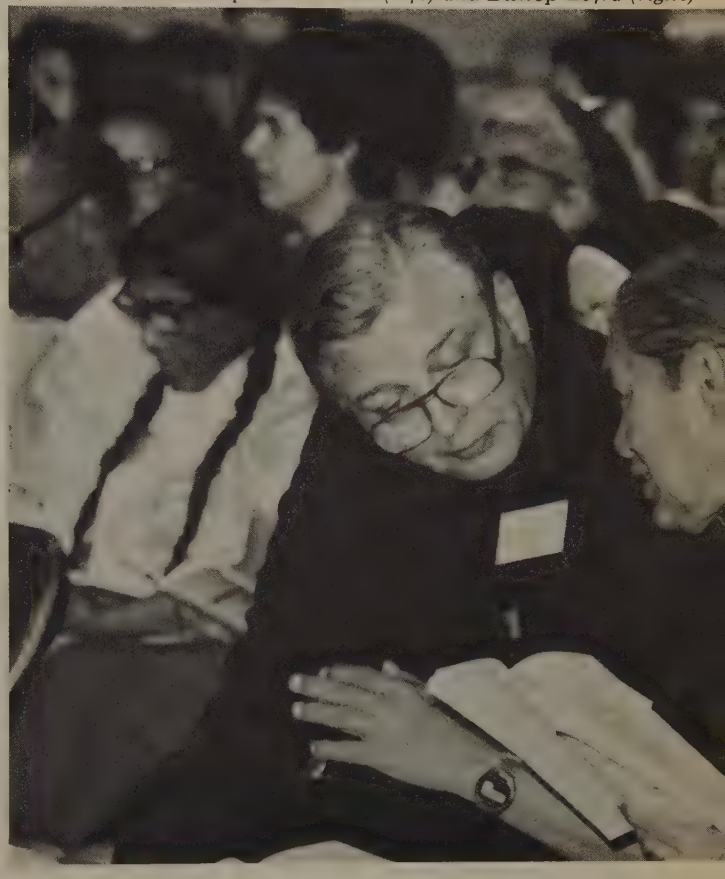
5-7. Characteristic smiles

8.▲ ▼9. Below: Bishop Ottenweller (left) and Bishop Zafra (right)

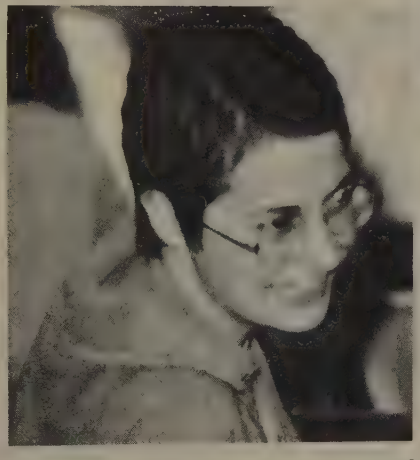
Sr. Stephen, SSCK, WI



6.▲



Above: Merlin Becker, WI



7.▲

▼4. Below: A family of NY

▼10. Below: young participants at work

"Charity, therefore, is a sharing in the divine 'agape' (love). This charity, this love is spontaneous; always new; it continually finds different ways of expressing itself; it does not allow itself to be categorized. It invents unforeseeable solutions. Charity is further characterized by unselfishness, initiative, universality, and the gift of oneself to the point of sacrifice. In loving, a Christian must do as God does: not wait to be loved, but be the first to love; he must do it for his neighbor. St. John tells us that God loves us, he does not then conclude — as would have been more logical — that if God has loved us, we ought to love him in return. Instead he says: 'Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.' It is only because Charity is a participation in God's love, that we are able to go beyond natural limits to love our enemies and give our lives for our fellow human beings.

"For this reason Christian love rightly belongs to the new era, and the 'New' Commandment is radically new, and introduces something absolutely new into human history and human ethics."[2]

The five talks written by Chiara Lubich gave the Mariapolis its substance. But as always, that which made the talks bear fruit, was putting them into practice right away, day by day, and also sharing experiences among so many as to how they had lived the "Word of Life" chosen from the New Testament in relation to the topic.

This readiness to immediately put into practice the proposed ideas is one of the essential characteristics of the Mariapolis. Because, as Bishop Augusto Cerese from Portugal noted at Fatima, "The only way to enter . . . into the Mariapolis is to do it with our soul and our life; otherwise, we can grasp only the outward appearances of the Movement . . . If I discovered something of this experience of which Chiara Lubich told us, it is that she is trying to scan all the depths of love, of history and to go to the bottom of little things in order to make them great ones. Christianity, and hence the Mariapolis, make us transform everyday things into extraordinary ones. This cannot be learned in school, and not even in the university. It can be learned only in Jesus Christ."

The Mariapolises welcomed not only people already actively involved in the Church, but also those who had had little or no contact with Christian life and who found it there. With it they found the Church and the sacraments again.

Many bishops, priests, seminarians, religious men and women, as well as families, and persons of the most different backgrounds, including the underprivileged and the aged, participated in the Mariapolises all over the world.

In many of these gatherings at least half of the participants were young, and were therefore searching for their place in society. They came with their crises , the pressure of consumerism and at times a sense of rebellion.
sumerism and at times a sense of rebellion.

"I now see the world filled with God," said a Dutchman at the Mariapolis in Sevenbeek. "Since I learned that Jesus is in every person, I feel that my life has become an uninterrupted communion." And in that same Mariapolis, someone asked to be baptized because he had experienced "God's personal love for mankind."

"If the Christian religion is like this," a Swiss girl of 19 concluded in one of the Mariapolises held in Fribourg, "I do believe that God exists." And another, age 16, of Macomer in Italy stated, "I was an atheist, but after what I have

1979 U.S. Mariapolises: the number of young participants was impressive as in all other Mariapolises throughout the world.

experienced in these days, a strange thing has happened. I had found neither friendship nor love. For me everything was absurd and useless before coming here. I used to be always wrapped up in myself. Here I realized that I have been like a shriveled tree which, having received water, began to sprout once more and send its roots into the soil, seeking in the earth its extraordinary riches."

We could go on with endless examples. Certainly one of the most striking moments came when the talk centered on the presence of Jesus in those who suffer, was delivered. "May we never forget that we belong to the Church of the poor, and that our Movement must therefore be the Movement of the poor; all the more so, since this is nothing other than Christianity. At the end of our life — as we have seen — our final examination will be on this subject: the so-called 'works of mercy ' . . . ." So let us rectify our intentions and thereby transform every act of love toward every neighbor in need — whether at home, at work, in school, on the street or anywhere else — into one of the works of mercy. In this way we will open wide the doors of our hearts to all those we find out about each day who are miserable, abandoned, sick, sinners, alienated, rejected, the dregs of society, or whose human rights are trampled on, whether they are in our own cities and countries or in faraway places."[3]

The appeal found a strong and immediate response among the participants of the Mariapolis. "I realized that there is Jesus in my brother who is on drugs and that I must love him and help my family to accept him and to love him," said a young girl. And the mother of a handicapped boy stated, "I should accept this son as a gift of God for me, as a blessing for our family." And this is what a handicapped man from Switzerland had to say, "Through the themes of the Mariapolis I have come to understand so many things. Above all, when I heard of meeting Jesus in those who suffer, I discovered my role in life."

We could quote example after example, but the experience of the Mariapolis cannot be described in written words. Only by experiencing it (as the Bishop from Portugal pointed out), can we grasp their reality. It is "a supertrampoline," remarked one woman who attended one of the three Mariapolises held in Northern Italy.

"I am positive that this will change my life," said a young woman from St. Louis, at the end of the Mariapolis in Alfred, N.Y.; and a young man from the same city discovered a new outlook on life which he described like this, "For me the Mariapolis was to learn to look at the beauty in everybody instead of looking at their bad points."

For a priest from Canada the highlight of the week was to see that in the Mariapolis there was no generation gap and how the spirit lived there could bring a deeper unity or build unity in the world.

A father of a family from New York summarized his experience like this, "It was a very warm week, one in which I encountered Christ again." And a little girl from Indiana almost echoed his words, "The best thing about this week is that I learned to love Jesus." This love gave everyone the sense that the Mariapolis was only the beginning.

"It's super," said a girl from Boston, "I think everyone is excited to go home and to live it."

"I am going back to bring the love I found here," commented a mother from Queens, N.Y.

When we come to a Mariapolis for the first time, thirsty like the Samaritan woman at the well, our surprise is as great as hers. There at the well we find Him, looking us straight in the eyes, into the deepest recesses of our hearts.

"I don't know for sure how much of the life-giving water I've been able to take away with me" — one participant said — "but I have the certainty of the immeasurable depth of that well of love." ●

2) "When did we see you, Lord?" New City Press, NY, page 110.
3) Ibid, page 63.

An afternoon of games ending with a colorful send-off of balloons, was welcomed by people of all ages (a few weeks to 86 years old). Playing together was an experience of unity as was the rest of the Mariapolis.

City not forsaken

Say to the daughter of Zion, "Look,
your savior comes,
the prize of his victory with him,
his trophies before him."
They shall be called "The Holy People,"
"Yahweh's Redeemed."
And you shall be called "The-sought-after,"
"City-not-forsaken."

(Isaiah 62:11-12)

The awakening

Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices,
they shout for joy together,
for they see Yahweh face to face,
as he returns to Zion.

Break into shouts of joy together,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for Yahweh is consoling his people,
redeeming Jerusalem.

Yahweh bares his holy arm
in the sight of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

(Isaiah 52:8-10)

A light has shone

The people that walked in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow
a light has shone.
You have made their gladness greater,
you have made their joy increase;
they rejoice in your presence
as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.

For the yoke that was weighing on him,
the bar across his shoulders,
the rod of his oppressor,
these you break as on the day of Midian.

For all the footgear of battle,
every cloak rolled in blood,
is burned,
and consumed by fire.

For there is a child born for us,
a son given to us
and dominion is laid on his shoulder;
and this is the name they give him:
Wonder Counselor. Mighty God,
Eternal Father. Prince of Peace.

(Isaiah 9:1-6)

The shepherds

In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified, but the angel said, "Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favor."

Now when the angels had gone from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." So they hurried away and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about him, and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds had to say. As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen; it was exactly as they had been told.

(Luke 2:8-20)

From the book THE REVISED JERUSALEM BIBLE copyright © 1966 by Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd. and Doubleday & Company, Inc. Published by Doubleday & Company, Inc.

The last chronicle of Pompeii, Herculaneum and Stabiae

HOT ASHES

by ORESTE PALIOTTI

August 24, 79 A.D., 11 a.m. One of the most terrifying catastrophes of history.

Visibility over the Gulf of Naples was clouded by fog, and the morning air was heavy and oppressive. Otherwise it was a day like any other. True, earth tremors had been felt along the coastline recently, but nobody had given them much importance. In the region of Campania, phenomena of this kind were not new. Around one o'clock, however, a cloud of an unprecedented size and shape, issuing from Mount Vesuvius, was sighted at Misenum, headquarters of the Imperial fleet under the command of Pliny the Elder.

The scene was so awe inspiring that Pliny the Younger, nephew, and at the time guest, of the famous naturalist, was to remember it years later in a letter to Tacitus, "It's shape was more like that of a pine rather than any other tree, as though its long trunk made the branches reach out from a great height. At times the cloud appeared white, at times dark and spotted, according to the amount of soil and ashes it carried. To a man like my uncle, the phenomenon was important enough to be observed at closer range . . ." In the meantime Pliny the Elder, received a note from a certain Rectina, whose villa was situated right at the edge of Mount Vesuvius, begging him to save her from the imminent danger. Therefore, since this was no longer a matter of scientific curiosity but rather of necessity in order to save the people along the coast, Pliny the Elder embarked in great haste for the disaster area. He was, however, not yet particularly concerned; he even took notes of what he observed as he went along.

In the meantime a dark curtain of vapor spread over the magnificent bay, laden with threats and forebodings; the sea was in turmoil as if by an internal boiling, making navigation difficult.

Pliny the Younger continues: "Hot ashes mixed with pumice and other stones blackened and smashed by fire, were already beginning to fall on their boats, becoming hotter and more dense as they drew nearer. In front of Herculaneum, the sea formed a sandbank altering dangerously the entire coastline. Pliny wondered for a moment whether he shouldn't turn back as his pilot had advised him, but then he decided, "Fortune favors the daring. Let's veer towards Pomponianus' house." Pomponianus lived at Stabiae on the other shore of the gulf, and it was exactly there, suffocating from the poisonous exhalations from the ashes, that the great scientist had to pay with his life for his act of daring.

A little before eleven a.m., life in Pompeii was bustling. Its gates and streets were teeming with peasants bringing their produce from the farms, laborers seeking to be hired, porters carrying bundles, women on their way to the public fountains to draw water, screaming children, as well as the usual loafers, just hanging around. Along the most important business arteries the shopkeepers were engaged in lively negotiations with prospective buyers. The "thermopolium" where all kinds of beverages were served and even snacks, were overcrowded. The cloth dying establishments were in full activity. In the bakeries, the heavy grindstones were creaking as they were being made to turn by slaves or mules. On one particular street, Modesto, the baker, had just put

One of the thousands of victims of the terrifying eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. Casts have been made by putting liquid plaster into the cavity left by the bodies in the petrified ashes.

It happened 1900 years ago.

eighty-one round loaves into the oven. Elsewhere, the cook of the wealthy Vettii family was busy preparing a juicy stew — although nobody, alas, would have time to think about dinner that night.

Eighteen years before, the little town had suffered serious damage from an earthquake, but by now all the reconstruction and restoration of the buildings was almost completed. Everything was built according to the latest styles of Rome, more modern and luxurious, even though this meant sacrificing the city's original Greek and Samnite character. Only the Forum, where progress had been slow, was still full of scaffoldings and blocks of marble and trunks of columns lying about here and there. In the large gym next to the amphitheater some youths were hard at their exercises even though the hall was still in the midst of remodeling. One of the young men was just wiping the sweat from his body before massaging it with scented oil. Not far away a physician, his bag filled with surgical instruments, was on his way to a patient. Outside the gate of Herculaneum a family was gathered for a funeral banquet.

It was about eleven o'clock when, suddenly, the earth began to undulate and a terrifying roar covered the crashing noise of the first collapsing buildings amidst the screams of the poor victims buried underneath. Those who looked toward Vesuvius, towering about ten kilometers away, beheld a terrifying spectacle: its top was split open and from it rose a column of fire exploding into a maze of luminous projectiles.

What had happened? The "plug", which for more than nine hundred years had prevented the escape of molten rock from the bowels of the volcano, had literally blown off, laying bare the menacing death hidden beneath the peaceful greenery of the vineyards.

As the first slabs of the shattered volcano began to fall from above, crushing roofs and terraces, the people shook off their daze and began to run for cover. There were screaming and weeping everywhere. Some looked for relatives, others implored the gods. Soon there came a heavy rain of small stones, pumice and volcanic ash, which at first did not appear particularly dangerous. Wouldn't it be best to stay put at home and wait for the storm to pass? This delay proved fatal for the citizens of Pompeii. As usual, those who had little to lose didn't hesitate to run as fast as they could to the gates of the city, heading for the open country or the beach. Not so the wealthy, who owned all sorts of worldly goods including priceless works of art, and who were now lingering in their homes feverishly reaching for their most valuable possessions. Even as the walls were shaking, bags were filled with gold and silver coins, and cupboards emptied of silverware and precious knicknacks. In their haste, many women covered their arms and necks with bracelets and necklaces, and their fingers with rings — a tragic show of opulence while death stalked all around them.

A shop, complete with benches and furnishings, brought to light by the excavations carried on at Herculaneum.

And in the meantime the rain of small stones continued to fall all over, violating the intimacy of the aristocratic dwellings, penetrating into the atriums, the peristyles, into the jealously fenced-in gardens, covering mosaic floors and flower beds. It accumulated on the roof tops causing them to collapse with a violent crash on the helpless people who thought they were safe indoors; it filled the streets and the temple courtyards, obstructed doors and windows which could never be opened again. Only twenty minutes had passed since the explosion and already heaps of debris reaching nine feet in height blocked up the streets.

Now the cloud had completely darkened the sky; night had fallen in mid-day. The darkness was broken only by the burst of flames rising from Vesuvius and by the torches lit by those pathetically attempting to flee. By now nobody believed that this was only a temporary cataclysm.

There was only one hope left, to get away as quickly as possible. Before fleeing, however, a Jew managed to scribble two words on the wall expressing the horror of those moments. The words were: Sodom and Gomorrha.

The gates were rushed by thousands of women and children. Some, overloaded with possessions, made their own escape and that of others impossible; others, in their scramble to escape, ran naked. Many were trampled to death.

At the Marina gate, a huge crowd hurried to the pier in order to find exit by way of the sea. But the seaquake, having shaken the sea bottom, had destroyed the few boats that were

lett. Along the shore, the water had receded, leaving fish behind to struggle on dry land. In despair, many people tried to turn back, only to be trampled underfoot by by the oncoming crowds.

By now the eruption had entered its culminating phase — the one of the famous "pinetree" described by Pliny. With a deafening roar, Vesuvius spewed forth a rain of ashes, releasing sulphur anhydride and other lethal gases.

It was a true chemical bombardment that was befalling the city and any attempt of protection by pressing a piece of cloth or the hem of one's garment to one's face proved useless. The impalpable ashes penetrated the narrowest openings even into basements where many unfortunate people had gathered to await the end of the cataclysm. They all died, suffocated by the lethal gases, as did the thirty-four inhabitants of a villa just outside of town. In the direction of the Nucerian gate three families — thirteen people including small children — were struck down outside the walls which they had just managed to cross. In the gladiators' quarters just behind the theater, the victims were sixty-three, two of them gladiators locked in a cell, whom nobody had thought of liberating from their chains.

Along with the human tragedy, it was also a tragedy for animals; from Vesonius Primus' dog, whom his fleeing master had forgotten to unleash, to the dove roosting over her nest as though in protection of the tiny eggs which would never hatch.

While Pompeii was in agony, a river of boiling mud, overflowing from the volcano's crater, rushed downward burying all the villas and homes along its way. And even Herculaneum, the delightful, peaceful Herculaneum, nestled right at the foot of the volcano, was doomed. There was nothing left for the inhabitants to do but to evacuate in mass and seek refuge in nearby Naples. Thus, in contrast to what happened to the Pompeiians, almost all of them were saved. But the river of mud, slimy and penetrating, continued flowing along the streets, be-

(continued on page 28)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REDISCOVERY

Herculaneum was discovered accidently in 1707. Exploration of the city was first undertaken in 1738 by means of underground shafts. Because of the difficulty in penetrating the enormous mass of volcanic ashes which had become rock and which covered the city, all work was halted a number of times. Due to modern techniques, however, from 1927 on excavations were carried on, on a regular basis. The unearthing of Pompeii was begun ten years after the exploration of Herculaneum (1748). Nevertheless, it was only after 1860 that a thorough digging project was carried on according to scientific criteria. Of recent history is the discovery of several splendid villas at Stabiae and Oplonti, residential suburbs of Pompeii.

In the last few years, a re-awakened interest has grown around the unearthed cities thanks to the art-exhibition entitled "Pompeii A.D. 79" which, since 1976, has been on tour in Europe, Asia and the United States where, from April to July 1979, it was seen in Boston, Chicago, Dallas and New York under the patronage of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Xerox Corporation.

Top: A "thermopolium" — a kind of snack bar — in Pompeii with a view of its sales counter, where refreshments, and aromatic wines were served.

Center: Pompeii: The Forum, center of urban life. It had already been damaged before the Vesuvius eruption, during the famous earthquake in 62 A.D.

Right: Herculaneum: One of the famous villas, the House of Stags.

WHY DID VESUVIUS AWAKE IN SUCH A VIOLENT ERUPTION?

SCIENCE

Active volcanoes

by Piero Pasolini

Volcanoes are found in many places on earth; we all know what they are. However, to understand why and how they are formed, we must consult modern theories explaining the movements of the earth's crust — the science of "plate techtonics." Techtonics is the study of forces within the earth that form the earth's mountains, volcanoes, and ocean basins. Plate techtonics is a theory developed by earth scientists in the the 1960's which describes the earth's surface as being fractured into about twenty rigid plates which can move and collide with one another.

Beneath us, toward the center of the earth, the temperatures become increasingly hot and there are layers of increasing density. The outer crust is divided into two rock layers totalling seven to twenty eight miles in thickness, depending on the exact location. The first layer forms the continents with their continental shelves. The second layer is the real "crust" which covers the whole earth, cooled and solid. For most of the earth it is covered only by ocean water; but it is also hidden underneath the rock slabs of the continents.

The "mantle", approximately 2000 miles in depth, lies under the crust. The mantle acts as a very dense fluid with a temperature varying from approximately 1000° C to 1500° C. These fused rocks are composed mainly of silicon, aluminum and magnesium.

The outer core and inner core complete our imaginary journey to the center of the earth. The outer core begins about two thousand miles beneath the earth's surface and is believed to be molten. The inner core has a radius of approximately 1500 miles and is composed of almost pure iron and nickel. Temperatures are extremely high.

To explain the movement of the earth's crust, we are most concerned with the mantle. There is a slow but continuous passage of heat in the mantle which amounts to only a few watts per square meter. This heat transfer results in convection currents within the mantle, in slow but continuous movements, with material ascending, travelling along parallel to the earth's surface, descending, etc. While moving horizontally beneath the crust, this dense rock from the mantle moves the earth's crust, fracturing it into large slabs or plates, which then can move. This motion does not seem to affect the internal heat of the earth, probably due to the large amount of natural radioactivity still present, and still producing heat, in the earth's interior.

The slow movement of the crustal plates has split continents. The great continental slabs of rock are floating on this top moving layer of the mantle.

Throughout geological epochs, going back millions of years, the external appearance of the earth's surface has been changing continuously because of the movements of the plates. This phenomenon is called "continental drift."

About 70 million years ago, both the Americas were united to Africa and to Europe (therefore, the Atlantic Ocean did not exist at that time). Australia and Antarctica were united to Africa on the eastern side and to Asia. Subsequently, India detached itself from one side of Africa and rammed into Asia, forming the Himalayan chain of mountains.

As a consequence of these movements, the earth's crust is fractured and great cracks have been formed which become wider and wider. Molten rock from the mantle called "magma" seeps up through the cracks. As this rock solidifies it forms new crust. In some cases, one plate slides down under another.

The Atlantic Ocean provides an example of sea-floor spreading. Convection currents carry molten rock up to the oceanic ridge which extends from the North Pole to the South Pole and force it into large cracks in the ridge. As the molten rock hardens, it pushes the ocean floor and the continents of North and South America, on one side, and the continents of Europe and Africa, on the other side, away from the ridge.

On our Pacific coast, the plate which supports the Americas is overriding another plate which is wedged underneath. The continent above is folded and uplifted resulting in the Andes and the Rocky Mountains. Similar geologic happenings occurred off the coast of Japan, on the bottom of the oceans in the zone between Europe, Asia, and Africa and many other places.

Understanding of plate techtonics and the internal structure of the earth helps us understand the different types of volcanic activity. Wherever plates split, the molten rock emerges and cools, forming an area of new crust and closing the fissure. However, in areas of active volcanoes, there is an imbalance in the pressures and the new crust doesn't close the fissure. Therefore, there is almost constant volcanic activity with magma coming to the surface in

those areas. The most striking example of this kind are the volcanoes in the Azores and on the coast of Iceland positioned directly above the Atlantic fault, that is, directly above the edge of the Atlantic plate.

The volcanoes along the Andes, Central America and Alaska present a different picture. There we find plates wedged underneath continents pushing them up and folding them into mountains. The surfaces affected by friction cave in. Hot magma forces its way through the cracks between the plates, as one plate overrides the other. Often the rocks which are crushed at very high temperature explode at the surface. Most volcanoes are found along a belt, called the Ring of Fire, that encircles the Pacific Ocean. Starting from Antarctica the belt runs through the Andes, Central America, the Rockies, Alaska, the Aleutian Islands, down along the western side of the Pacific in Kamchatka, Japan, the Philippines, Malaysia, New Guinea, etc.

A similar phenomenon on a smaller scale occurs where the African, European and Asian plates intersect. In the area which includes Italy, the Balkans, Asia Minor and the Aegean Sea a small plate was formed called the Aegean plate which is actively colliding with the large plates resulting in folds, subductions, and overridings. The Alps, the Carpathians, and the Armenian mountains are formed from these collisions. Frequent and disastrous earthquakes occurring in these zones are derived from these movements. Even the volcanic activity, which is especially characteristic of the Italian and Aegean side of the plate, originates from the plumes of molten rock formed by the tremendous friction in the scraping surfaces or by the emergence of the mantle's magma in the fractures.

The entire length of Italy, is marked by volcanoes, some active and some inactive at present, extending from northern Italy to the southern islands of Volcano and Stromboli and ending in Sicily at Mt. Etna which today is the most active of Italy's volcanoes. From ancient times, violent volcanic eruptions have been part of Italy's history.

Volcanoes behave differently depending on the nature of the material that comes from the vent; they can be explosive or effusive. A particular volcano can change during its period of activity. The first type of volcano is the most dangerous. A volcano becomes explosive when a quantity of magma and hot gas (water vapor) accumulate under a layer of solid material which is being crushed due to one of the plates on the earth's crust moving in its direction. The pressure rises to an extreme degree and everything explodes, pulverizing entire mountains. Huge fiery clouds composed of a mixture of very fine powder, steam and tiny particles of fused lava are projected into the sky. Sometimes this cloud moves, covering entire regions with ashes and fiery debris, burying and burning everything. This occurred at Mount Pelée in Martinique in 1902. If the volcano is in the ocean, tremendous tidal waves could result as in 1883 during an explosion at Krakatoa which pulverized an entire island.

The second type, the effusive volcanoes, are less violent. Fused magma (lava) erupts from this type of volcano, flowing more continuously and with less force. It seems that its reservoir of magma, or magma chamber, is deeper and directly contacts the mantle. The volcano Etna belongs to this second type. It became active about five hundred thousand years ago and seems to have always been as active as it is today.

Vesuvius has had a more violent history. It first erupted about one million years ago. Today we see the remains of that eruption in the large low crater and low-lying mountain, Mount Somma, that forms the base of Vesuvius. About five thousand years ago there was some volcanic activity. For the next few thousand years it was inactive. In August of 79 A.D. it awoke in a monstrous explosion that caused the enormous cap of Mount Somma to collapse. A scorching cloud of gas and ashes covered the area burying the cities of Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae. Since that day, it has remained active for almost two thousand years with alternating explosive and effusive phases. The volcanic activity has created an enormous cone within the crater of old Mount Somma and has almost filled the cavity rising to a height of about four thousand feet.

The last eruption of Vesuvius in 1944.

The last eruption of Vesuvius, in 1944, was another tremendous explosion, emitting about 27.5 million cubic yards of lava and an enormous cloud of volcanic dust which swept all the way to the Balkans, destroying homes and killing 200 people.

Since then Vesuvius has seemed "dead". The inside of the crater sunk into a frightening vortex. Today there are no traces of smoke. Is it to be trusted? Certainly not. Particularly if we consider the area surrounding Vesuvius where there is low-level but continuous volcanic activity, for example in the town of Pozzuoli. This region is on the same fault line on the edge of the Aegean plate with active volcanoes like Etna and Stromboli not too far away.

Along the same fault line further north are the remains of other ancient volcanoes, dead for many centuries, the hills of Latium, the craters of Bracciano, Vico and Bolsena (all in the province of Rome). Are they to be trusted? They seem to be really extinct. The hills of Latium haven't been active for 25 thousand years. They somewhat resemble Vesuvius, having a large base formed from an explosive volcanic eruption a million years ago and a narrower volcanic cone at its center formed in subsequent epochs. The so-called Hannibal's Fields are located in the crater of the cone. Also the famous lakes of Albano and Nemi were formed in the lateral craters. The eruption of that volcano must have been similar to that of Vesuvius in 79 A.D.; enormous clouds of ashes and volcanic dust covered the area where Rome stands today.

I have given just a brief explanation of volcanoes, highlighting that which is related to the previous article, "Hot Ashes." The most interesting aspect of this, scientifically speaking, is the discovery of the connection between the movement of the plates on the earth's crust and volcanic activity. The earth is full of internal movements causing fractures in the earth's crust which in turn, provoke the shifting of the continents, the creation of mountains and also seismic and volcanic episodes — which, in the total picture of the ongoing changes in the earth's structure are small phenomena. However these "small phenomena" become gigantic catastrophes in the history of humanity.

WORD OF LIFE

"He has looked upon his lowly handmaid" (Luke 1:48).

Do you know where in the Gospels these words are found? Do you know who spoke them? Certainly you do, for Mary has a place in everyone's heart, therefore also in yours. She has won us over as only a mother knows how. And she said these words when, in the presence of Elizabeth her cousin, she sang to God the song called the "Magnificat." It begins like this:

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my savior; because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid."

"He has looked upon his lowly handmaid."

The expression, "God looked upon" is often used in the Old Testament. It indicates the dynamic love of God who cares for and intervenes on behalf of his own. Here God "looked upon" Mary with the salvation of humanity in view.

To be "lowly" means to be little, nothing, of little value; it is the necessary condition in order to be a "handmaid" of the Lord.

"He has looked upon his lowly handmaid."

Why did God "look upon" Mary? He did it in order to choose her, young as she was, from among all young women in the world, to entrust her with an incredible task: that of becoming mother of the Son of God, the God-Man, Jesus Christ.

Mary was "looked upon" in this way because of her destiny; so were God's chosen ones. But in a certain way, we are all "looked upon" by God. If this were not so, Jesus would not have said those moving words, "every hair on your head has been counted" (Mt.10:30).

Yes, you too, are "looked upon" by God. He has something magnificent in mind for you, he has foreseen a splendid plan for your life. You can live it, you can fulfill this plan if each day, each moment, you do God's will as Mary did.

"He has looked upon his lowly handmaid."

Lagrange, the well-known French theologian, has said that here Mary is not speaking about her humility; she is living it.

Mary had the most perfect attitude towards God, her Creator.

Did you ever notice? Clearly, nothing could have been more intelligent or appropriate or more in harmony with faith.

How logical it is to approach the Lord of heaven and earth, the Creator of the universe, being completely open to his word and will, fully aware of one's own littleness!

This was Mary's attitude.

Thus, she cooperated with God in the most efficacious manner.

Moreover, since Mary acted so perfectly, she is the model for every Christian. Like her, all believers, including you, can fulfill their divine destiny in the measure in which they are willing to die to themselves in order to let God work.

"He has looked upon his lowly handmaid."

God has a preference for those who are rejected, despised, and held in little consideration by the world. It is precisely they whom God uses to manifest his power. Scripture says, in fact, "It was to shame the wise that he chose what is foolish by human reckoning, and to shame what is strong that

he chose what is weak by human reckoning; those whom the world thinks common and contemptible are the ones that God has chosen — those who are nothing at all; so that mankind can do no boasting before God" (1 Cor. 1:27-29).

This is how the God in whom we believe, acts. He is not afraid to tarnish the image of his greatness by siding with the weak, the defenseless, the poor. He demolishes wealth and honor and all else that might appear to give security, strength, and support.

He prefers the common people. This was true with Mary and has generally been true with the saints, those men and women whose names have gone down in history because they benefited humanity, or communicated a special message from God.

Look at those he chose as apostles. Look at John Bosco, the Curate of Ars, Angela Merici, Martin de Porres, Gemma Galgani. Look at Bernadette and the children of Fatima.

This is why, in today's world dominated by consumerism, widespread injustices, and the misuse of power, God is the source of hope for all believers, especially for those who feel crushed and powerless.

Are you one of them?

Be glad because God has a soft-spot for you.

Are you instead wealthy? Do you play an active role in the destiny of your country? Is your name in the social register?

Make yourself poor in spirit, simple, and humble, so as not to keep God far from you.

God "looks upon" you only if you resemble Mary.

In fact, "*He has looked upon his lowly handmaid.*"

Chiara Lubich

EXPERIENCES

Each month a "Word of Life" appears in Living City or in its Supplement. The following are experiences that some of our readers shared with us in living the Word of Life.

My husband and I had just gotten our income tax return. It was the first time since we married two years ago that we had something in our savings account. It was a good feeling to have five hundred dollars and we were thinking about what we should do with it. We decided we needed baby furniture and other things for the coming of the baby. Then we added up what it would cost us to go to the Mariapolis and it came to $520.00, for both of us. We became uncertain as to what to do. We decided then to read together the word of life for the month. It was, "Seek first the kingdom of God." Let's put God first we said and we made arrangements for both to go to the Mariapolis. Later on, Mike got a call at work from one of his friends saying he was selling all his baby furniture. We went over to look at it and found out that they were asking only $30 and added in the package a crib, a swing, a baby bath, baby clothes, maternity tops for me, diapers, racks, and all kinds of things. For us it was God's answer to our faith, even if small, in his love.

C.H.

In the morning I usually try to meditate. Of course, for prayer and meditation, silence is necessary. But this time I had to do without it. The walls were reverberating with rock and roll music, and I should add that I can't stand that kind of music. Classical music is more to my liking.

Two young men were working on my neighbor's roof and they put their radio down beside my window. The volume was at its loudest and the situation was worsened by the workers' hammering.

What could I do? I remembered that I had to "persevere" (as the word of life was reminding me) [1], love and see Jesus in them. Remembering that, made it easy to love them. The workers sang happily along with the music, making it enjoyable even for me.

I must admit that that half hour of meditation was one of the best. Because of my effort to love them and their music, the situation, instead of disturbing my meditation, had contributed.

1) "By patient endurance you will save your lives" (Luke 21:19).

K.P.

Whenever I do work around the house, I like to return the tools to their proper place. My oldest son has the habit of using the tools and never returning them. Consequently whenever I go to use these tools they are never there where I can find them.

Recently I was painting the front of the house. At the end of the day, when I went to put the brushes away in the garage, I decided to hide them to prevent them from being "misplaced". As I was putting them on a high shelf I remembered the word of life for July: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." The thought came to me that these brushes were my riches, my wealth, and I was refusing to share them. The brushes are no longer hidden and hopefully never will be.

E.F.

IDENTIFICATION

By Alla

After having ridden one block on a city bus a few nights ago, I jumped off to purchase ice cream for my mother's birthday celebration. When I boarded the second bus, I noticed that the most nauseating stench was being emitted from the body of a passenger seated at the front door. It was a smell of decaying flesh. The man's pleasantries were being ignored by the others who were bravely trying to tolerate the foul odor. I felt guilty as I chose a seat far away from him. My weak stomach was becoming upset. I felt so sick in my stomach and in my soul. You see, I realized that Jesus knew that I, a black woman, didn't want to be associated with that black man.

From his comments to the bus driver I suddenly understood that both of us were getting off at the same stop. Suspecting that this passenger walked with difficulty, I became desperate. He wore stringless shoes and no socks. So deteriorated was his flesh that fluids were oozing from his feet and ankles. He was old, unshaven and practically toothless. He was filthy.

The bus stopped. Swinging and swaying, he made desperate efforts to steady himself with his one crutch. No one offered him assistance. The bus driver sat patiently. The rest of us exited through the rear door.

On the sidewalk I stood alone about twelve feet from the front door of the bus. No longer did I disdain identification with the man. "It was the stench," I kept telling God.

Minutes passed as the poor man strove to stand and to descend the steps of the bus. I stood motionless in the same spot talking with God. In my soul I understood that this man was the image of Jesus in His abandonment and that I had to love him in that moment or I would be guilty of betrayal. I kept telling Jesus that I really loved Him, but that my stomach was too weak to serve Him in that man. The answer always came clearly. I could not practice discrimination or have preferences. Unable to force myself to do anything else in that moment, I prayed that God would not let him fall down the steps. When he alighted on the sidewalk, I breathed with relief. I hoped that he would be able to cross the street to transfer to his next bus.

My hopes were in vain. As he tried to step away from our bus, I noticed that he couldn't walk steadily and I feared that he would surely fall. I just stood there wondering how he had boarded that bus and how I just happened to have been on it. Suddenly he fell and rolled, groaning in pain! It took that moment of his agony to arouse me from my inertia.

The street was deserted. So I mustered my wits, my courage, and my strength, lifted that huge man to his feet and dragged him to a lamp post, I propped him up and begged him to try not to fall while I retrieved his shoes and his crutch.

When I returned, he asked me to put on his shoes. As I touched his swollen feet, my fingers on one hand became all wet as ice cream dripped from the other hand. I fought back the tears thinking that perhaps in that moment my love had been purified.

Only half his foot could be forced into each shoe. After several attempts to cross the street, both of us realized that he couldn't make it, with or without the shoes. I knew he had not been drinking as he explained to me that he was old and sick and had been trying to get to the city hospital. Still swaying and clinging to me, he seemed about to fall any second and to pull me down with him.

I propped him against the post again and went into the street to hail a cab. Many passed me by. When one finally stopped, I explained that I was trying to get the man to the hospital. The cabbie curtly replied, "Get the cops lady, get the cops." I felt that I couldn't leave him alone to get the cops as it was probably his faith in me that kept him standing on his feet and clinging to the lamp post in desperation.

Quickly I explained to the cabbie that I had no intention of abandoning the man, that I was going to accompany him. Reluctantly he agreed to take us, but made no effort to help as I literally dragged the man to the cab and pushed him in.

(continued on page 28)

ECUMENISM
by Gabri Fallacara

The unity of Churches: no to pessimism

Pentecost is a very special holy day for Christians; and north of the Alps it is celebrated and felt in a particular way. This year I spent Pentecost with over three hundred Germans — Lutherans and Roman Catholics — with many young people among them, who came to Italy in order to learn more about the progress toward unity being made among churches at the meeting organized by Centro Uno[1] of the Focolare Movement.

There were members of the Bruderschaften (the Lutheran Brotherhood of Common Life), a few young Methodists of "Young Life", Lutheran pastors, as well as Roman Catholic priests and many other persons of various ages and walks of life who, accepting the invitation from the Ecumenical Center in Ottmaring and various Focolare centers in Germany, had come from all over the country.

The gathering was held at the Mariapolis Center of Rocca di Papa, from June 6th to the 9th but the participants also made an "ecumenical tour", visiting several spots of ecumenical interest both on their way to and from the site of the meeting. They stopped at Trent where they were welcomed by Bishop Gottardi, and toured Christian Rome making a visit to the Benedictines of St. Anselm where Father Gerard Bekes, a lecturer on ecumenism at the adjacent university, spoke of their holy founder with specific reference to the ecumenism presently carried on by the order. They went to see the catacombs in Rome; they visited Loppiano, the miniature city built and inhabited by young people of the Focolare Movement, and they also made a trip to Florence, for a visit with Cardinal Benelli.

During the meeting at Rocca di Papa, Igino Giordani, Director of Centro Uno, gave an outline of the history of ecumenism in Italy. Quoting the great Italian novelist and poet Alessandro Manzoni, he said among other things, that "Italy, with all the great disasters it had to suffer, was spared the worst: religious division," except in some areas close to the border.

At the meeting, the theme to be reflected upon and put into practice was "Who is the human being?", a topic profoundly dealt with by Chiara Lubich in several talks on the presence of Jesus in our neighbor.

In a climate of brotherly love, the participants discovered in one another the new dimensions of man given by Christ himself, and they became more aware that ecumenism concerns all of us because Jesus wants us to be united. The desire to work toward unity grew stronger and became a stimulating force especially among the young. The Lutherans attended the Roman Catholic mass and I, too, together with the other Roman Catholics, went several times to the Holy Supper of the Lutherans. There was no intercommunion, of course, but we exchanged experiences about our choice to love God and to love our neighbor.

We did everything we could to get to know one another, to appreciate one another, to love one another. We prayed and sang together; we discussed themes that were common to both churches, seeking that which already unites us. We tried to live that spiritual ecumenism which is a conversion of the heart, and which makes the people of God willing and ready to hasten the course toward unity by following the necessary steps that are being taken at other levels, such as the theological, and so on.

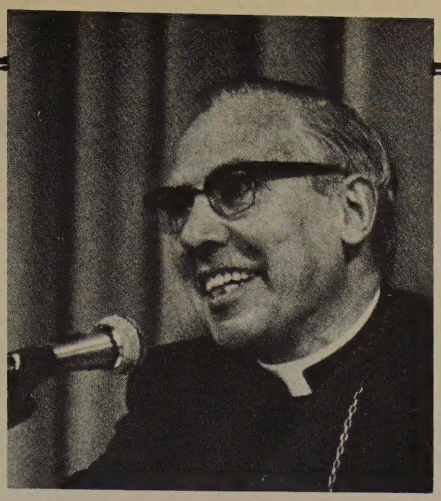
For this reason, the visit of the Vice President of the Secretariat for Christian Unity in Rome, Bishop Ramon Torrella Cascante, and his assistant, Msgr. Erich Salzmann, was particularly welcomed by the participants who for two hours attentively listened to the account of the deep, intensive work that is being carried on and the concrete progress that has been made. Bishop Torrella reported on the present status of the ecumenical movement both in its negative and positive aspects. One of the negative aspects — he rightly pointed out — is pessimism, which we must not give into, because results must be measured with a vision of faith. At the root of pessimism he saw a lack of of Christian patience; patience which is identified with strength, endurance and work. Persons or groups who are in a hurry, risk skipping over some stages that are necessary to the ecumenical movement.

Another negative aspect is the temptation to withdraw into our own world, a tendency at whose root is the erroneous idea that the desire for internal unity within the church is contrary to the quest for more global unity which must be realized among the churches.

Among the positive aspects Bishop Torrella pointed to the increase of bilateral dialogues (technically, the "bilateral dialogue" is the result of a permanent commission set up for the dialogue between two churches or ecclesial communities in order to study matters of common interest).

Another constructive fact is the sincere commitment of the heads and responsible authorities of the different churches to continue in the effort to promote Christian unity. One well known example,

1) Centro Uno is the center for ecumenism of the Focolare Movement.



CITTA NUOVA (2)

Left: Bishop Torella, Vice President of the Secretariat for Christian Unity.

Far left: The Rev. Gunnar Grandberg, a Swedish Lutheran minister, recently transferred to Rome after spending several years in New York as pastor of the Church of Sweden of New York with another participant in the Ecumenical meeting at Rocca di Papa, Rome.

also widely covered by the press, was the participation of all the churches in the events at the time of the death of the two popes, and the following two elections last year.

By working for Christian unity one acquires an ever deeper conviction that the ecumenical movement is a sign of our times, Bishop Torrella assured his listeners. It is in accordance with God's will; it is making progress. Certainly, it cannot be arrived at by human effort alone, nor will it advance with merely courteous relationships. But it will go ahead in as much as we are faithful to the Gospel and to the Holy Spirit who calls us to fulfill the will of Jesus: that all may be one.

Msgr. Salzmann, a student of Cardinal Bea who was the moving force and first president of the Secretariat, then gave a general outline of the development of the Secretariat for Christian Unity. It was created in 1960 for the purpose of preparing some research work for the Vatican Council and for its entire duration it kept in contact with the Council.

Msgr. Salzmann then gave a documented report on the progress made so far in the contacts with the various churches, with particular emphasis on the bilateral dialogues between Catholics and Lutherans, since the majority of the people participating in the meeting were of these churches.

There was, finally, a lively "question and answer" session, on subjects which are of particular interest in Germany and wherever Christians of different denominations live in close proximity. The question of intercommunion also came up. "Why," it was asked, "are Lutherans still not allowed to receive the Eucharist celebrated in a Roman Catholic Mass?"

Bishop Torrella replied that a first step has already been made in this regard between Lutherans and Roman Catholics, between the Reformed Church and Roman Catholics as well as between Anglicans and Roman Catholics, in the form of a mutually drafted document on the Eucharist, or the Holy Supper, as it is called in the Churches of the Reformation. From the theological point of view there have been some points of agreement in which the basic aspects of the Eucharist are mutually accepted; and this is real progress. According to the official position of the Roman Catholic Church, however, it is not sufficient to have the same faith in the Eucharist or in the Holy Supper; in order to have intercommunion, the churches must also share the same faith on a global level, and this is so because the Roman Catholic Church considers the Eucharist, above all, a sacrament expressing the unity of the Church which is already achieved, while the Lutheran, the Reformed and the Anglican Churches see the Eucharist rather as a means in order to progress towards unity. Here, therefore, lies one of the difficulties. Theologically, in fact, the Roman Catholic Church does not regard the Eucharist only as a means towards unity but also, and above all, as a sacrament in which the already accomplished unity of the Church is being celebrated.

Under exceptional conditions, local Roman Catholic bishops may grant special permission to a Christian who is not Catholic to partake of the Roman Catholic Eucharist. Certainly this suffering in not being able to receive the Eucharist together as yet, concluded Bishop Torrella, reminds us that we are still, unfortunately, in a situation of division, but it can help us toward a deepening maturity.

Continuing on the subject of the road that lies ahead, the Vice President of the Secretariat for Christian Unity explained that the churches should not make concessions, because the ecumenical dialogue must always be conducted on the basis of truth and of charity at the same time.

In the ecumenical dialogue there is, therefore, a constant quest for the essential elements of an identical and common profession of faith; this will be reached, not with concessions from one side or the other, but with doctrinal studies from the point of view of truth, and also with a purification of the heart which is not only individual but collective. In conclusion, Bishop Torrella stated that there is authentic sincerity in the theological dialogue and in efforts to face the practical and pastoral questions as well. ●

A Christmas story

as told to DORI ZAMBONI

I was eight years old and intelligent enough to know that Christmas presents did not just fall down from the sky, but that parents prepared them for their children.

It didn't disappoint me; it was enough for me to know that Christmas was a time of celebration in which you received presents. However, at home there was a lot of work to do; our business completely occupied my parents' time. So much so that, they often had no time to think of little things, and even presents were remembered at the last moment.

But that year I was alone at home awaiting their return. Time passed. I thought I ought to prepare something to eat. I was in front of the stove which I barely reached, fixing supper, when my parents came home. They felt sorry for me as soon as they saw me. I recall my father caressing my hair and my mother saying something like: "Poor child."

I didn't understand at first, and later on I didn't want to understand. Finally, confused and embarrassed they told me: "You know how busy we are. Don't feel badly, but we didn't have time to go to the store and buy you something. We worked until now. It's already eight o'clock; but you'll see . . . tomorrow the stores are closed, and the day after, too, but as soon as they open we'll buy you anything you want."

My heart ached with sadness. I didn't want to believe it. I burst into tears and went to my room alone. I cried because I had no gifts and I could already see myself the next day when I would meet my neighborhood friends who certainly would ask me: "What did you get for Christmas?" They would show me all their gifts and I would have to answer: "Nothing." "If they had brought me at least a candy cane or a Christmas stocking, anything at all so that I could say: "This is my present,' I would have been happy enough.

It was a Christmas spent in bitterness for me. I did receive gifts, but they meant little to me.

The following year, around the same time, once again on Christeve, I found myself waiting alone until late. To myself I said: "You'll see, they'll forget this year, too." And I felt cynicism enter into my heart, a thing which is not normal to find in a child of that age. I was too proud to tell them: "Don't forget to buy me a present."

I felt I could not bear to suffer as I had the year before. All of a sudden, I remembered something that I had seen not long before.

A lady had come to our house to do the laundry and she had brought her child with her. She must have been about three years old. A poor woman and a very poor child. It was winter and she wasn't even wearing sox. She wore a little smock over a faded dress and she had a pair of clogs on her feet. She sat on the bottom step of the stairs to my house. While doing my homework I would look at her every once in a while. She sat there in silence, looking into empty space.

Suddenly I saw her do a strange thing. She took off a clog, wrapped it in a dirty handkerchief and began to rock it in her arms and sing to it, as if it were a doll.

As I remembered that scene, immediately another thought passed through my mind: "Perhaps there is a way to be happy even when you feel disappointed. Maybe the only way to be happy is to make others happy."

I ran into my room and opened a tiny trunk in which I kept my dolls. I had many because I had kept all that my relatives had given me since I was little. Some had lost an arm or leg or had a broken head, but others were still beautiful. There was a little one that was my favorite. It was one of those chubby dolls that you can dress.

I looked at it, gathered all its things, placed them neatly in its crib and wrapped them in a package. *(continued on page 28)*

1980
LIVING CITY
will go monthly

IDENTIFICATION

(continued from page 13)

En route to the hospital the cabbie listened as I questioned the man about his condition and his home address. At one point the man told me how grateful he was and that if I ever needed any medical assistance, I should go to another hospital and ask for his daughter, a nurse over there, who would fix me right up. Momentarily I wondered why he hadn't gone there. Then I remembered that I should neither judge nor question motives. I had to love blindly and purely.

Finally, we arrived at the emergency entrance of the hospital. It was another exhausting effort to drag the poor man from the cab to a nearby chair. Perhaps after realizing that I had not known the old man, the cabbie seemed to have changed his attitude. Even though he did not get out to help us, he cut off the meter and sat patiently smiling during the long time it took me to get the patient out. When I made a comment about trying to hurry to release the cab, he answered, "It's all right."

As I was unable to seat the man in the chair, I left him hanging off the side and explained that I would run in to get a wheel chair.

The cabbie continued to sit there to watch the old man while I went to get help. Inside the hospital a guard explained that they had no wheel chairs, but agreed to accompany me with a stretcher. When I returned to the old man, there sat the cabbie, still watching attentively. He smiled and asked, "Okay now?" I assured him that everything was fine and thanked him for having waited.

When I reached my mother's apartment I realized it was very late. I thought I didn't even have the ice cream anymore to cheer her up after a long lonely evening. I found her however in the midst of a happy birthday celebration with a group of unexpected friends who had come to her with their guitars.

It was God's love coming back to me. ●

A CHRISTMAS STORY

(continued from page 26)

Before the time at which I thought my parents might arrive, I ran as fast as I could to find that lady. I knew where she lived because I had gone to call her once, to come and do our wash.

It was a run-down street. The wooden stairs were without light, and its steps were shaky. I reached the top and knocked. The door opened unto a dimly lit room. The lady recognized me and said: "What do you want, Miss?" I was only a child and she called me "Miss!" Breathlessly I told her: "It's for your little girl," and I turned around and ran. She stood there at the door and called out after me: "Thank you."

I arrived home panting for breath. My parents hadn't as yet returned. I set the table and began to fix the supper.

When they came, I felt, before even looking at them, that I had guessed correctly. They had forgotten once again. But I had only one thought inside me: that little girl! She would awaken, perhaps still tonight or tomorrow morning, to see that doll. How happy she would be! That chubby doll would fit in her arms much better than the clog.

My parents tried to console me, but I didn't cry. Sure, I had a lump in my throat, but my thoughts kept returning to that little girl. At least she was happy.

It was the first time in my life that I was happy even though I received nothing. ●

HOT ASHES

(continued from page 18)

coming torrents; rising, engulfing homes, crushing walls, unhinging statues from their pedestals. As though poured through a funnel, it overflowed into the theater, destroying the splendid marble-decorated stage, and rushed on in its unrestrainable course toward the sea.

Herculaneum was to disappear under 45 to 60 feet of that mud which then slowly solidified into stone. In the suburbs, the Pisoni family had waited until the last minute to abandon their magnificent abode — a true museum of art — with bronze and marble statues of incalculable value, and a library lined with volumes of philosophy and poetry, testimonies to the high level of esthetic and intellectual refinement man had achieved in those times. And nothing, absolutely nothing could be saved from the malodorous mire.

But before the mud could swallow Herculaneum, someone managed to remove a great treasure: on the first floor of a home facing the "decumanus maximus" an unknown hand had detached from a wall a wooden cross. Nineteen hundred years later, the imprint of that cross, grabbed in flight, is still clearly visible.

For three more days Vesuvius continued to vomit fire, but for miles and miles all around, there was no sign of a living creature in the deserted landscape. In Pompeii alone sixteen thousand, out of a population of twenty thousand, perished. It was a scene of devastation, prompting Martial to lament: "This is Vesuvius, only recently verdant with vines, here the golden grapes were pressed in their vats . . . This city (Pompeii), was the seat of Venus, more beloved than Sparta, this place (Herculaneum) was privileged to bear the name of Hercules. Now everything is silent, buried by the flames of the terrible conflagration. Not even the gods would have wished that such a thing be allowed!" ●

Pompeii, "House of the Great Fountain": a marble theatrical mask.